

I Don't Do Politics.^{15th} © Xen.

I overheard two Vietnam vets in a VA waiting room passing time swapping war stories; the two were around age 70^{ish}. One day a grand daughter brought home a note from her grade school. The mobile Vietnam Wall Memorial was coming to town. Local politicians who were seeking positive public exposure, photo ops and self-aggrandizement influenced the school to petition students to serve as useful idiots enlisting parental support for a large turn out of the event. The grand daughter told her teacher, "My grandpa is a Vietnam Veteran." School officials became very interested and invited him to interview for a speaking engagement to the student body highlighting the Wall event. All this was political self-promotion, vote pandering, and PR. His grandkid was a hero, related to a real Vietnam Vet, wow! Her popularity zoomed; he could not let her down. At the interview, a school official gave him a list of do's and do nots of what he could speak about. **Lots of do nots.** He was to coo about how the US triumphed over tyranny, and did many heroic and marvelous things in a war that saved the world. The school told him to paint this mythic, fantasy-epic for the children and their parents in larger-than-life proportions about US involvement conquering evil... In other words, tell lies. He must not speak the truth: of crippling torture or murder in the killing fields; US abandonment of our allies left to enemy occupation. Of mixed American-Vietnamese orphans and children who were, with their mothers if caught, brutally butchered on the spot with rifle butts and machetes by Communist soldiers in their zeal to destroy all traces of America from that country. America claimed the War was over; however, for those we abandoned the real War had only just began. **Their only crime was being born half American and forsaken by that nation in the wrong place and time.** America's scapegoating, shaming, blaming and abandonment of US soldiers and Vets; absolutely do not mention Vet suicides, no realities about that war at all. He disgustingly said, "I don't do politics..." and walked out. Of course, this humiliated his grand daughter. Her popularity fell faster than it rose; she was socially dashed. They used her as a stooge to coerce him into selling his soul to the state...she could never understand why grandpa refused to speak at her school. Standing up for truth, rejecting political fabrication and lies, holding to his personal values and convictions took the guts and bravery of a Vietnam Veteran. "I don't do politics." She was too young to understand her grandfather's courage. She will never know of what happened in a back room behind the facade of show and tell politics. Perchance, when older and wiser she will understand that true courage is what her grandfather showed rejecting tyranny. He stood up tall for what was *right* per his values and mores by accepting consequences for his actions. The reason *why* "My grandpa is a Vietnam Veteran." Perhaps someday when much older and wiser she will understand why for Veterans like him, America died on January 21, 1977.

